11/24/71

Dear Harold,

I had been putting aside all your letters because of schoolwork, and was planning to respond at the first chance--when I went home for Thanksgiving break. That's where I am now, and the mass of letters piled up is overbearing. Cannot make detailed response except where necessary. I want to get all the letters (youra and others) out of the way now, although at the moment I am not particularly happy to be working on the assassination. I'm still recovering from that Belin monster in the Times. I am I that naive? I should have realized how sick and bad the man is, but it was still a shock and very upsetting to see his evil in action, esp. after our correspondence. The dense of frustration is really eating at me.

Let me correct a mistaken notion in your letter of 10/15 to me. You say you know the Harper piece was X-raysed and quote S-O as source. You are wrong here. Harper never got to the autopsy. He found his piece 11/23. What S-O refer to either came from the back seat or was found in street by Weitzman. Checking now, I see that CD 5, p. 151 says Harper peice was X-rayed and microscopically examined for metal but none found.

Re your response dated 11/6 to some of my PM comments: Panel part, p. 18, penult: If you refer merely to the direction in which the edges point, I think you are making a weak and questionable point. Direction of edges is not always a reliable indication of direction, at best, and it must be taken as contributory to other, more precise means of determining. With the ant. neck, I think the fact that there had been surgery there which included a tube being pushed in and pulled out precludes anything of value being seen in the direction the edges were pointing at autopsy. The really solid thing to do, which is always done, is to take microscpic sections for the conclusive signs of entrance or exit. This was the only precise thing left for the aut. docs to do, and their failure to do it, when it was well within their capability is extremely culpable. That is what I recommend emphasizing.

Your 11/6, p. 2, re my comments of p. 53, panel section: I don't mean to be so holy, and you don't have to tell me what a quickly done analysis this was. I know and appreciate that fact. You are to be commended for making so few errors as you did. But you are not to be excused for the few you made--I'm sure you don't expect to be--and I was merely trying to correct what I think are errors. When I wrote my comment, I was pissed off at what you wrote. Maybe that is why I came off as if giving a sermen. We all do that, so don't take offesne.

You wrote me a suggested change of last 2 lines of graph 3 on p. 53, corrected reading, "wound up not using "puncture," which to most people suggests entrance." I don't particularly like that and suggest a change like this:

"wound up not using "puncture," which in the context of this autopsy reprt, suggests entrance."

I just note the end of your 11/6 which asks for a quick response. I missed this when I hastily read the letter upon receiving it, and am sorry that I've not gotten around to it until now. What you ask concerning my comment on 69, 3rd up is really obscure and not at all apprent to me. Do you want to know if I think you should take out the reference to you being first to discover neck frags in PR? If that is all you request here, I say it's up to you. If you have reasons for saying this, then keep it in. It sounded presumptuous to me. Perhaps you could word it differently: like "To my knowledge I was the first," etc. Your question re p. 90, 5th graph--I don't think any other reference is necessary for this point.

I think the best thing for us to do now, the way I can be most helpful, is for us to talk in person. Thanks for the invitation, which I hope to be able to accept over Chritmas break. Right now my mind is cluttered with other things, and I cannot devote the time I wish to the matter of the PM's. There will be no work over the nreak and I should have a clear head with which to concentrate on things relevant to us.

I just noted that I left my file of correspondence on and with Ned at school, so I can't see exactly what he or I wrote, and cannot now answer his letters to me. I don't think that I will answer him, but let me read the file once more. My recollection--for I have been trying to put this out of mind--is that I became utterly disgusted with Ned. I don't like him, and have no respect for him. His understanding of the case is poor, in the least, and can hurt us--especially your information. He is wormy and inspires no trust. I'd prefer to have nothing more to do with him. He elicits too high a price for his damned money, as far as I'm concerned. His offer to me re editing your book was disgraceful, simply becuase he consulted no one--esp. me--in advance, and had no right to drag me in again in that way. In a certain context, it is not a bad offer, for I would be willing to do such a thing over the upcoming summer break if reimbursed. But his offer to reimburse me said nothing about also paying to get the private printing out or the edited/condensation version published. And, of course, it means you'd have to wait until this coming summer.

I have a lot of other letters to get to, so I'll make carbons of them for you instead of rep eating things.

I'm looking forward to seeing you and Lil again.

Best wishes,

Howard